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Viewing cable 05KUWAIT4451, SHI'A MOSQUE ATTACKED BY YOUTH IN JAHRA; SHI'A

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Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05KUWAIT4451	2005-10-17 10:50	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Kuwait

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10172>
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10173>
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10175>
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This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 004451

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [KISL](#) [KDEM](#) [SA](#) [KU](#) [SHI](#)

SUBJECT: SHI'A MOSQUE ATTACKED BY YOUTH IN JAHRA; SHI'A
FEAR RISING SECTARIANISM

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reason 1.4 (b)

1. (C) Summary: A group of youth between the ages of 14 and 18 attacked a Shi'a mosque in Jahra on October 7, burning a stolen car, breaking the mosque's spotlights, pelting worshippers with stones, and chanting anti-Shi'a slogans, including: "Death to infidel Shi'a, agents of America." No one was reported injured in the incident. Eyewitnesses estimate between 50 to 70 young men were involved in the incident. Police detained 12 young men, ten Saudis and two bidoon (stateless Arabs), for questioning. No charges have been filed against the youth. Shi'a clerics issued a statement condemning the attack, which local newspapers initially refused to publish. The statement was finally published October 16 in the English-language daily Kuwait Times under the headline, "Jahra Mosque Attack Sparks

Security Fears: Al-Zargawi influence growing?" Shi'a leaders told Political Assistant they fear the attack could signal rising Shi'a-Sunni tensions in Kuwait. Many observers suggest sectarian conflict in Iraq has contributed to the growing tensions in Kuwait, but this is not the first incident of its kind. End summary.

Shi'a Mosque Attacked by Youth in Jahra

12. (SBU) Around 8:00 pm on October 7, a group of youth, numbering from 50 to 70 between the ages of 14 and 18 attacked the Shi'a Mohammed Bin Abu Bakr mosque in the predominantly Sunni city of Jahra. According to eyewitnesses, the youths burned a stolen car in the vicinity of the mosque, smashed the mosque's spotlights, threw stones at worshippers, and shouted slogans accusing Shi'a of being infidels, of collaborating with "the infidel Americans," and of supporting Iranian Supreme Cleric Ayatollah Ali Al-Khamenei. No one was reported injured in the incident. (Note: A similar incident occurred last Ramadan when several shots from a small-arms weapon were fired at a Shi'a husseinya, a traditional gathering place for Shi'a men, by unidentified persons; no one was injured in the attack. Most observers claimed the attack was sectarian-motivated. End note.)

13. (C) According to Abdul Hussein Al-Sultan, Secretary General of the Justice and Peace Gathering, a moderate Shi'a political association, who spoke with the owner of the mosque, Hussein Al-Qattan, after the incident, one the slogans chanted by the youths was, "Death to infidel Shi'a, agents of America."

14. (SBU) The English daily Kuwait Times reported in an October 16 article that, despite being notified about the incident at 8:15 pm, local police did not arrive at the mosque until 9:15 pm, at which time they were reportedly beaten by the "attackers." Multiple sources reported that police arrested 12 young men involved in the incident - ten Saudis and two bidoon (stateless Arabs) - between the ages of 14 and 18. Several sources also noted that National Assembly member (MP) Awad Barrad, an Islamist associated with the conservative Scientific Salafi Movement, attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain the release of the youths detained. The Kuwait Times reported the young men were questioned by police until 5 am on October 8. It is unclear if they were released and/or charged with a crime.

15. (C) Al-Sultan told Political Assistant that Al-Qattan complained to Interior Minister Shaykh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah about the incident. Shaykh Nawaf promised to "build a better Shi'a mosque, provide security for (Shi'a) worshippers, and give the Shi'a a bigger area." According to Al-Sultan, Shaykh Nawaf also asked Al-Qattan to inform him of any additional threats to the mosque. A report on the incident provided by Dr. Abdullah Sahar, a Shi'a political science professor at Kuwait University, said the "victims of the attack" do not/not think the Ministry of Interior is serious about addressing the incident especially since there was no discussion on how the juveniles involved were incited to commit such an act.

16. (SBU) The October 7 incident was not the first attack against the Mohammed Bin Abu Mohammed mosque, one of only 36 mosques belonging to Kuwait's minority Shi'a population, which represents nearly a third of the population. (Note: There are approximately 1070 Sunni mosques in Kuwait. End note.) "Over the past several years, this mosque has been the target of several aggressions and harassment," Hassan Al-Issa, a liberal Sunni, wrote October 12 in the Arabic daily Al-Qabas.

Shi'a Fear Rising Sectarianism Influenced By Iraq Conflict

17. (SBU) In response to the mosque incident, more than 20 Shi'a clerics in Kuwait issued a statement condemning the attack. A translation of the statement published October 16 in the English-daily Kuwait Times, stated that the incident occurred "under the eyes of security men" and called on the Government "to shoulder its responsibilities and protect mosques and worshippers from attacks by Takfiri extremists." (Note: Takfir is the act of identifying someone as an unbeliever (kafir). Many Salafist groups believe Shi'a Muslims are unbelievers, or "infidel." End note.) The statement continued, "We are afraid that Kuwaiti press reports about the Al-Zargawi group spreading into the Gulf region have become true." It concluded: "We regard this incident as an alarm bell to all of us so the wise people, scholars, intellectuals, dignitaries, and all sectors of the people in this country can act to nip the sedition in the bud before it rages and consumes, God forbid, the country and its people."

18. (C) One of the signatories of the statement, Mohammed Baqer Al-Mohri, head of the Shi'a Clerics Gathering, a Shi'a

political association reputed to have ties to Iran, told Political Assistant there were "definitely influential and Takfiri people behind the youths involved in the incident." Another Shi'a leader, Abdul Hadi Al-Saleh, General Secretary of the Ja'afari Waqf, a Shi'a religious endowment, echoed Al-Mohri's concerns, arguing that "Salafis, Takfiris, and fundamentalists" were behind the attack. Al-Saleh claimed clerics at a Sunni mosque near the Mohammed Bin Abi Bakr mosque were "inciting worshippers against the Shi'a mosque." He said Shi'a complaints to local police have been ignored and suggested the police "sympathize with the attackers." He concluded: "We have become desperate because of the absence of any action by the Government."

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